PILLAR 8 OF 8

WE WILL CHICAGO

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Creating access and connections through safe and reliable physical infrastructure and transportation networks

CHICAGO
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

wewillchicago.com

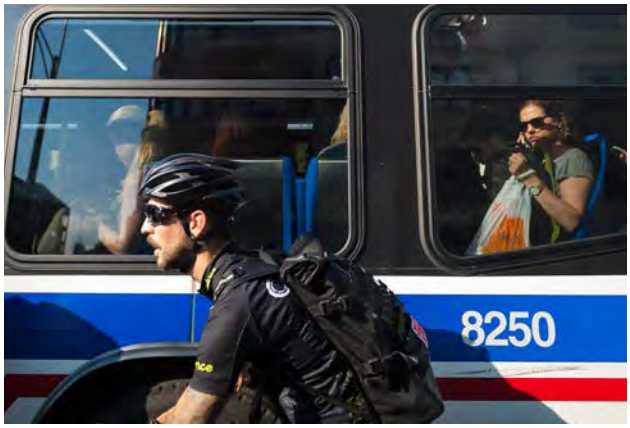
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Chicago's transportation and infrastructure systems support the mobility of people, goods, services and information throughout the city and beyond.

The systems include extensive passenger rail and bus routes, streets and alleys, highways, airports, industrial rail lines, waterways, bike lanes, sidewalks, trails, power grids, communications networks and other public and private assets.

Considered one of the most well-connected cities in the country and a global transportation hub, Chicago still has multiple gaps in services that impact the people who live and work here. The gaps include public transit services, neighborhood walkability, protected bike lanes, broadband access and negative impacts associated with infrastructure construction and operation.

The Transportation & Infrastructure goals are focused on maintaining Chicago's existing systems while enhancing their access and benefits to all city residents and workers.



"Public transportation spots are not always accessible to people with wheelchairs. Ideally, it would be great if all el train stops, Metra and Amtrak were wheelchair accessible."

– *Michelle* | **West Loop**

KEY TERMS

Complete Streets	The approach to planning, designing, building, operating and maintaining streets that enables safe, easy access for all people who need to use them, including pedestrians, people using mobility devices, transit riders, bicyclists and motorists of all ages and abilities.
Shared Mobility	Transportation services and resources that are shared among users, either together or one after another, such as bike and scooter sharing, carsharing, carpooling and vanpooling.
Universal Accessibility	Universal accessibility means that everyone—in all stages of life, regardless of any disability—can access transportation options that will get them anywhere they need to go.

> *"For decades, there has been commercial freight running adjacent to our church building spewing toxic chemicals in the backyards, parks and residential parking lots in our communities—something that does not occur in other neighborhoods, and it contributes greatly to poor air quality and health disparities."*
>
> – Melvin Thompson | **The Endeleo Institute, Inc, Executive Director**

Most maps within the plan incorporate data collected at one of several defined subgeographies, including official Chicago Community Area boundaries and census tracts/block groups used by the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey. Some data sources are only available at the Community Area level, while others are available at more detailed subgeographies. These subgeographies span areas that are non-residential, including parks, bodies of water, industrial areas, and O'Hare Airport. In these instances, the data presented is intended to reflect average conditions of the residents, employees, etc. who are located nearby.

GOAL 1

Ensure the city's transportation networks and infrastructure systems are safe, equitable and accessible for all.

While many aspects of existing networks and the built infrastructure sustain the lives of Chicagoans, not all residents experience the same level of access or connectivity. Ongoing efforts to expand and modernize Chicago's public transit, transportation and infrastructure networks should prioritize geographies and users that have been marginalized by public- and private-sector investments. Far South and West side neighborhoods experience more limited commuter rail service and predominantly Black and Latino households lack access to broadband internet. According to a Metropolitan Planning Council report, nearly every person in the Chicago region, or someone they care for, will face a disability that impacts their mobility at some point in their life. Age, illness, injury, pregnancy and genetics can all affect mobility. Chicago's infrastructure system must be designed to meet the needs of all residents, no matter their age or ability.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

1.1 Ensure transportation and infrastructure systems are equitably distributed, universally accessible and affordable.

1.2 Prioritize infrastructure that reinforces safe movement for all users, regardless of mode, age, ability, or income.

1.3 Design and maintain infrastructure that enhances quality of life and pride of place.

1.4 Ensure transportation systems support Chicago's world class airports.

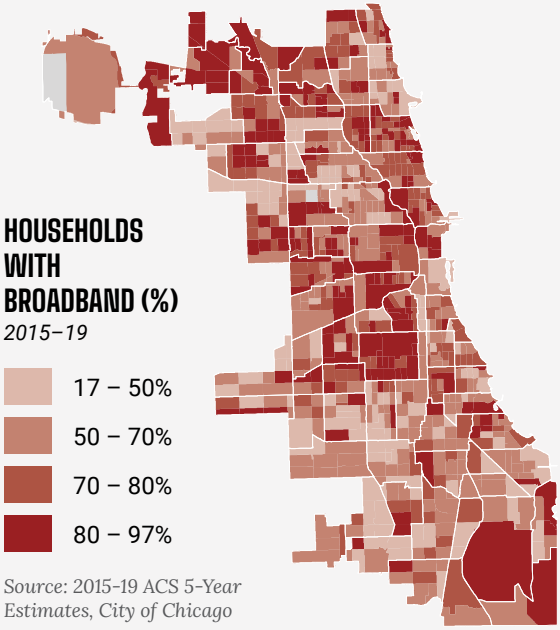
1.5 Ensure access to high-quality broadband internet across the city.

SUPPORTING DATA

The majority of Chicago traffic crash deaths involve vehicle occupants or drivers.

Source: City of Chicago Department of Transportation, May 2022

Less than 70% of South and West side households have broadband internet.



Source: 2015-19 ACS 5-Year Estimates, City of Chicago

> *I frequently ride my bike to a part-time job on the far West Side. As I trend South and West, the ride gets rougher and more hostile. There is noticeably less infrastructure for those outside of cars, and the car infrastructure is in notably worse shape.*

— Joshua Woods | **Connetics Transportation Group, Planner I**

GOAL 2

Create transportation networks that support greater connectivity by active and sustainable options such as walking, public transit, biking and other methods that do not require car ownership.

While investments continue to be made in the City's transit system and bike network, most Chicago commuters drive to work, according to U.S. Census data. Prioritizing programs to expand other transportation options, improve street safety and reduce the need to travel by car may result in reduced congestion, decreased pollution, cheaper transportation costs, time savings for commuters and more healthy and sustainable lifestyles for the entire region.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

2.1 Prioritize expanding public transit options in communities with the greatest mobility needs.

2.2 Prioritize public transit options that create connectivity across neighborhoods outside of the downtown.

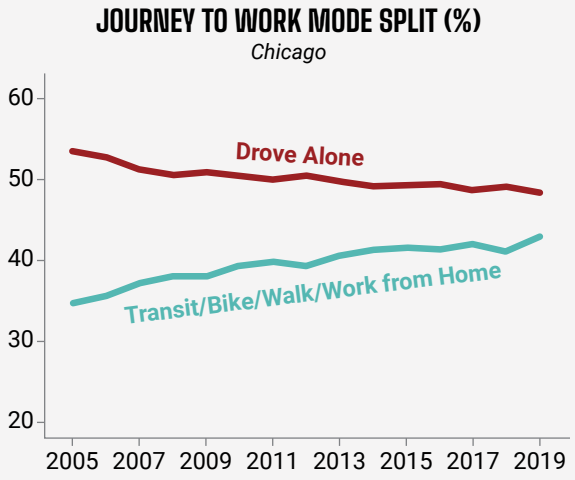
2.3 Integrate and seamlessly connect active and sustainable transportation options such as walking, transit, biking and riding scooters.

2.4 Prioritize infrastructure that is aesthetically pleasing and inviting, designing and building spaces that are calm, protected and safe for people walking, using transit, biking and making connections between modes.

2.5 Prioritize investments in infrastructure and transit that facilitate walking, transit and biking.

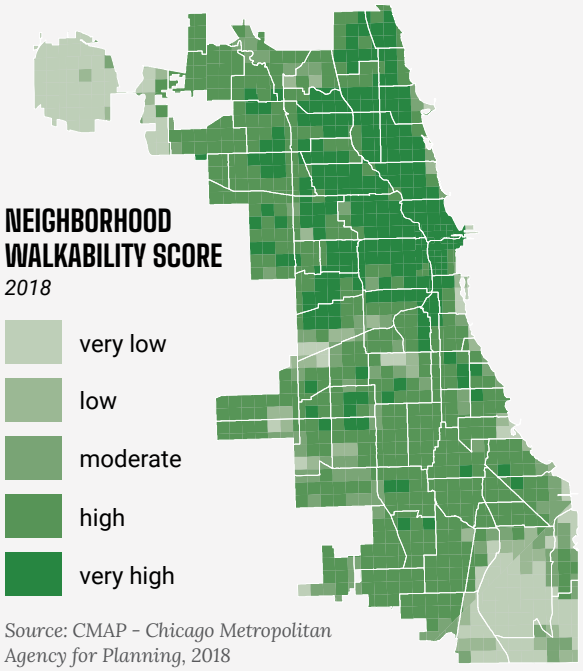
SUPPORTING DATA

More Chicagoans are choosing alternative transportation modes to work.



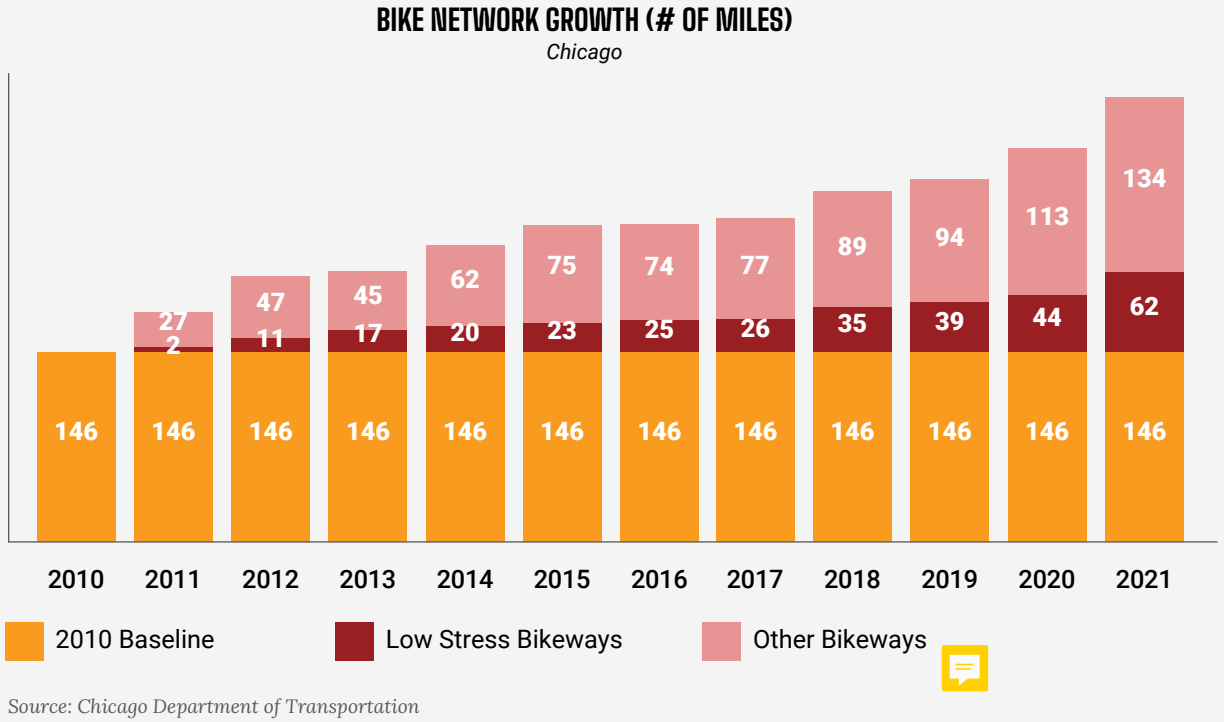
Source: ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, 2019

Chicago's most walkable neighborhoods are on the North Side.



Source: CMAP - Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2018

Chicago's bicycle infrastructure continues to expand citywide.



Source: Chicago Department of Transportation

GOAL 3

Balance the economic benefits of moving goods with negative impacts on communities, eliminating, then equitably distributing burdens.

Chicago's evolution as a global transportation hub is a strong contributor to the region's economy. However, this status comes with consequences to some residential neighborhoods that are disproportionally exposed to excessive air pollution and industrial traffic. Land use and investment patterns of recent decades have made certain predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods on the South, Southwest and Far South sides particularly burdened by negative industrial impacts.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

3.1 Make freight corridors safe for all, prioritizing the safety of people walking, using transit and biking.

3.2 Mitigate the health, safety and environmental burdens caused by trains, trucks and delivery vehicles.

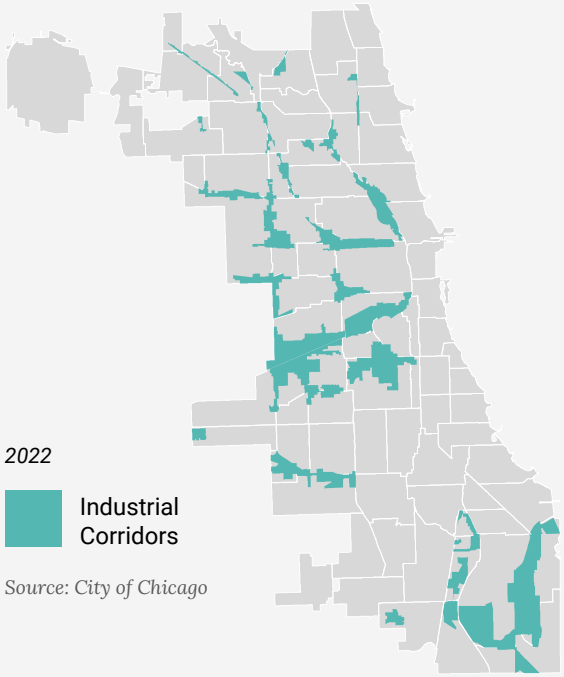
3.3 Reduce the disproportionate burdens on communities adjacent to industrial corridors, intermodal facilities and airports.

3.4 Ensure freight-related projects are compatible with local community plans.

3.5 Maintain the City's role as a global intermodal hub with strategic and innovative transportation and infrastructure investments.

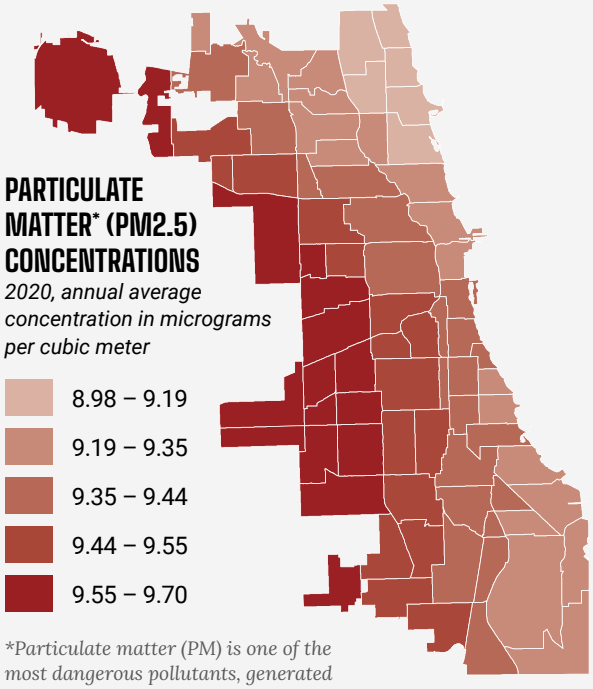
SUPPORTING DATA

Chicago's 26 industrial corridors are primarily located along waterways, highways and rail lines.



Source: City of Chicago

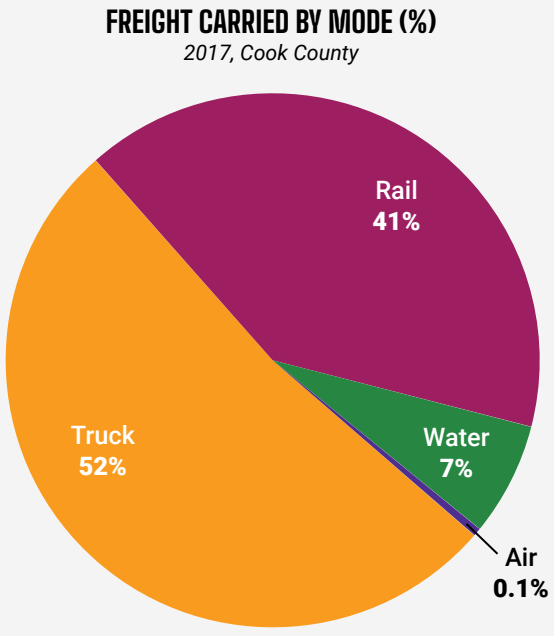
Areas located near highways and industrial facilities experience higher levels of air pollution.



*Particulate matter (PM) is one of the most dangerous pollutants, generated by industrial facilities, cars and trucks.

Source: City of Chicago

Trucks carry more than half of all freight in Cook County.



Source: Master Plan for Illinois International Port District (IIPD)

> *"Freight activity is a vital economic driver for communities. It is not something that people want to remove. But you want to be smart about the way it interacts in neighborhoods and on those corridors where you have heavy bike traffic and transit."*

— Dr. Billy Bachman | **Urban Design 4 Health, Senior Analyst & Marketing Strategist**

GOAL 4

Prioritize investments in communities that have been historically harmed by inequities in past transportation and infrastructure decision-making.

The construction of many interstate highways, institutions and large facilities in Chicago were often completed where socioeconomic factors provided the fewest barriers to their development. Today, their presence can present more burdens than benefits for nearby residents due to pollution, gentrification, displacement and other negative impacts.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

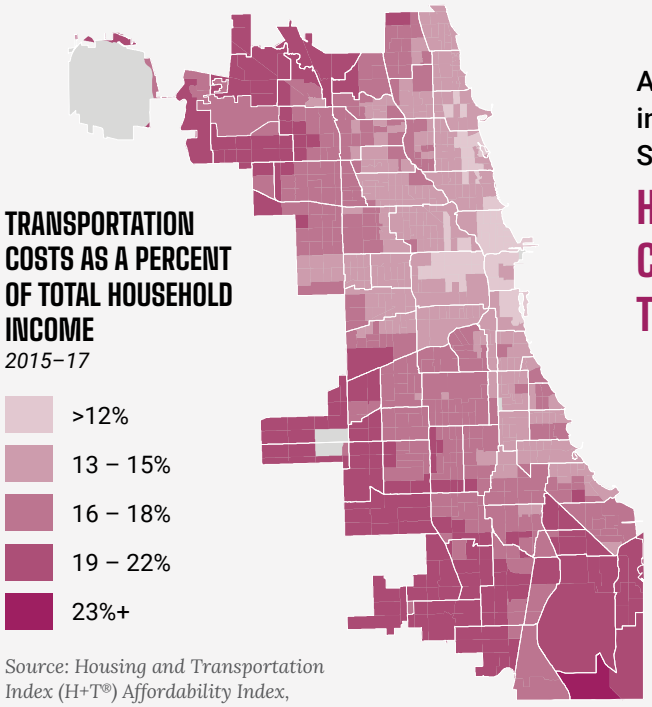
4.1 Reconnect communities that have been divided by transportation infrastructure.

4.2 Support neighborhood and network-scale transportation and infrastructure projects advocated by local communities.

4.3 Establish use of equity-related metrics in project development and evaluation processes for transportation and infrastructure projects.

SUPPORTING DATA

Households located near the city's borders generally experience higher transportation costs.

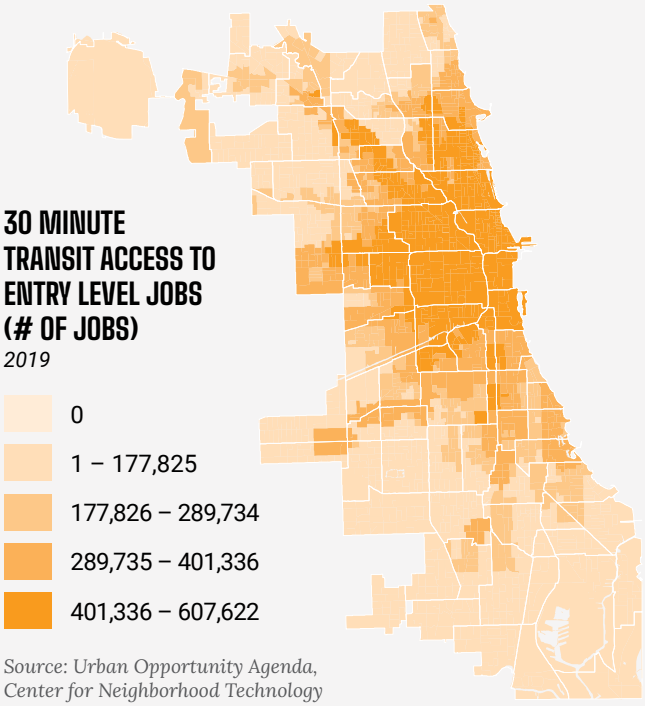


Source: Housing and Transportation Index (H+T®) Affordability Index, Center for Neighborhood Technology

Areas most impacted by roadway infrastructure, particularly on the South side, tend to experience

HIGHER TRANSPORTATION COSTS AND HIGHER TRAVEL TIMES TO JOBS BY TRANSIT.

Entry-level jobs with the shortest commutes are primarily located downtown and in adjacent community areas.



Source: Urban Opportunity Agenda, Center for Neighborhood Technology

> *"Early in this process we spoke a lot about how infrastructure has divided our communities, and our policies should focus on reconnecting communities."*
>
> – Ben Cosgrove | Englewood STEM High School, Biology and Chemistry Teacher

GOAL 5

Leverage resources for transportation and infrastructure projects that promote environmental sustainability and resilience.

Strategic public investments that enhance clean transportation options—such as bicycling and electric vehicles—and manage the impact of climate change—such as stormwater landscapes—will help make Chicago more sustainable for all.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

5.1 Reduce pollutants generated by transportation-related sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.

5.2 Expand the use and availability of transportation and infrastructure funding sources for all neighborhoods to increase climate-smart investments and overall community resiliency.

5.3 Invest in transportation and infrastructure projects that support resilience and protect water and other natural resources.

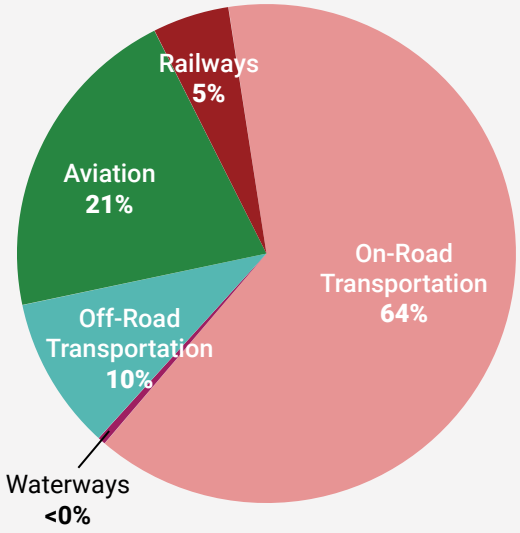
5.4 Leverage transportation and infrastructure assets to manage the environmental impacts of flooding and stormwater runoff.

5.5 Require the use of sustainable design guidelines and the use of renewable and sustainable materials in transportation and infrastructure projects.

SUPPORTING DATA

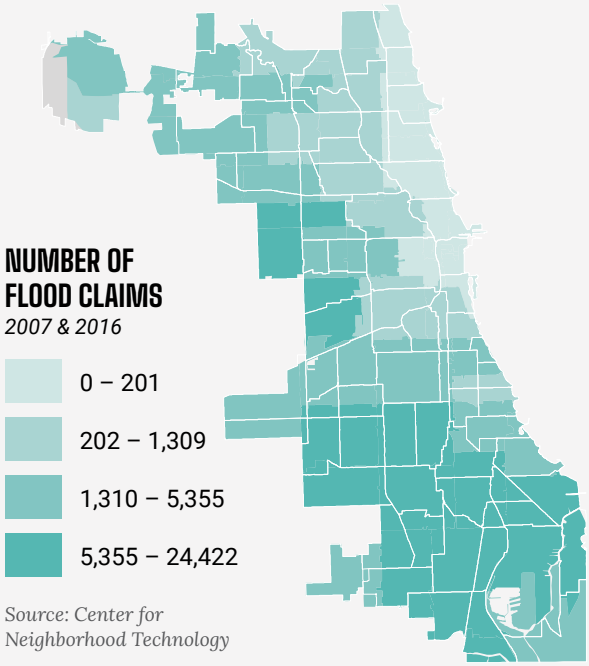
The majority of transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions comes from on-road vehicles.

TRANSPORTATION-GENERATED GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY SOURCE
2017, Chicago



Source: City of Chicago Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report

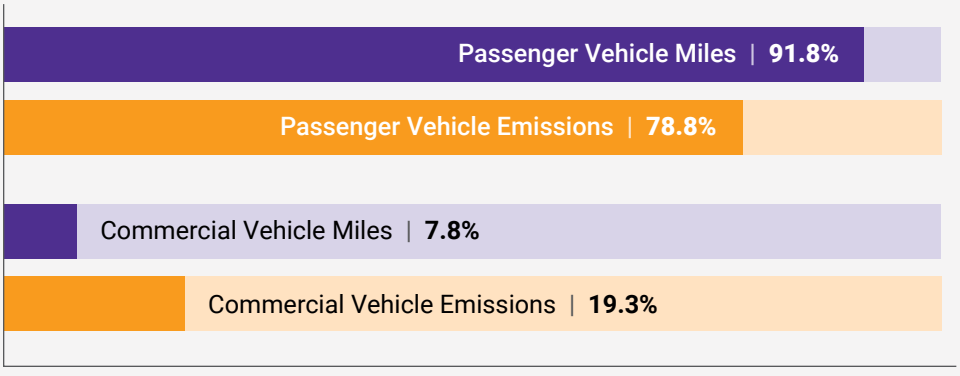
87% of flood claims are paid on the South and West Sides.



Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology

Passenger vehicles and gas-fueled commercial vehicles represent substantial opportunities to decrease harmful emissions.

VEHICLES MILES AND EMISSIONS FOR PASSENGER AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES (% OF TOTAL)
2020, Chicago



Source: Spring 2020 regional conformity model run, CMAP

"Ensure folks who are offering the plan are held accountable to what is in the plan. Create trust by showing folks that their engagement as a community is being honored both in listening and in following through."

— LaTanya Lane | **Volunteer**

*To see the policy ideas developed by the **Transportation & Infrastructure** pillar team, visit wewillchicago.com*